

## **Hiring at All Levels Targeting Collaboration & Communication Skills**

### **EPA Region 7 – Kansas City, Kansas**

**Description of activity:** The Region's strategic workforce plan identifies several strategies for meeting the skill and workforce needs of the Region immediately and over the long term. The plan describes the use of multiple hiring authorities to meet needs and specifically addresses the communication and collaboration skills needed to be successful in the long term. Specific activities included:

- Hiring entry-level scientists who possess collaboration and communication skills by recruiting at more than 15 colleges and universities
- Recruiting for specialists/experts with demonstrated collaborative successes
- Blue Skyways Team Competencies Expanded – Several new employees were immediately involved in community planning and outreach sessions, partner development contacts, and project management. In addition, the Region hired an Energy Advisor and an Energy Coordinator, one a specialist to advise Regional policy and the other a scientist with special skills as a facilitator and communicator to coordinate on crossover energy issues in media programs.
- Summer Temporary Students' Contribute to Reduce Lead Exposure in Communities – The Environmental Justice team hired several temporary summer employees recruited for their communication skills to implement partnership project with the Kansas City, Mo. Health Department. This collaboration, in its third year, relies upon the students' enthusiasm and skill working with communities and their creativity and diverse perspectives in problem solving.
- Continuity of Operations Gains Expert at Collaboration and Matrix Management – After identifying the need for a full time employee to maintain, adjust and continuously improve the Region's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), the Region selected a former FEMA employee with experience collaborating on contingency planning and on emergency response. Because the Region selected a skilled and experienced professional, the new employee was able to immediately lead an exercise with senior managers and provide critical recommendations to improve COOP implementation.